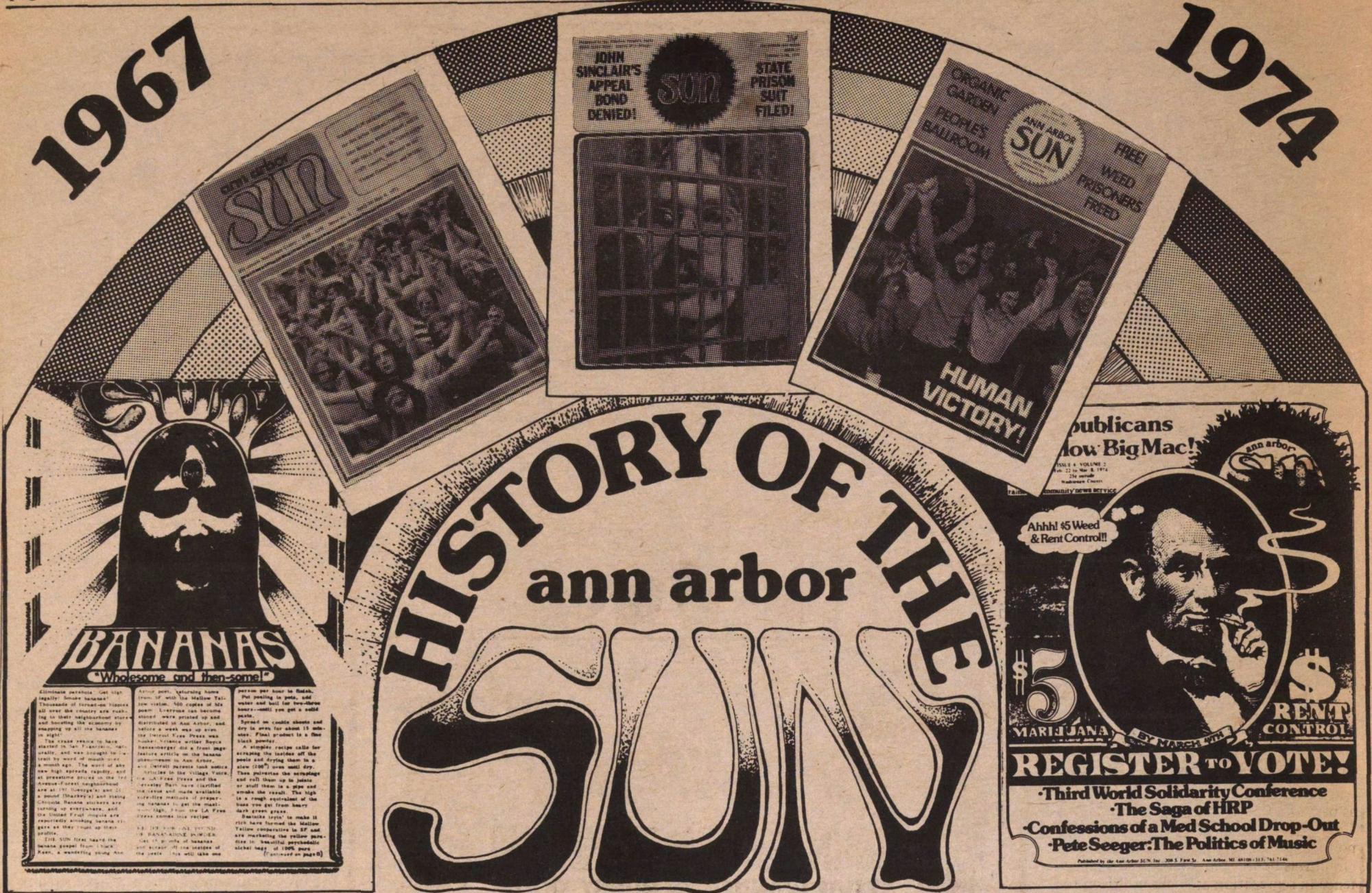


1961

1974



On May 1st the SUN reached its third anniversary in Ann Arbor. As those of you who've been following our progress since 1971 probably realize, we've come a long way. This issue of the paper is the largest — 32 pages — in our history. The SUN's circulation has been increasing steadily, as has its influence. Organizationally more people work with us than ever before. Economically we are finally pulling out of a continual deficit that has plagued the paper ever since its founding.

Although things are, especially economically, far from being secure (only 4 people here are getting paid below-subsistence salaries and we are very much in debt), the staff of this paper feels we've reached a turning point. Whereas as exactly one year ago at this time the SUN was completely shut down for 5 months, we are now hoping to go weekly in the fall.

On the occasion of reaching the three year mark in A2, we thought it might be appropriate to briefly describe how we got here anyway.

\* \* \*

The saga begins in 1964. In that year John and Leni Sinclair and 14 others formed the non-profit, cooperative Artist's Workshop of Detroit, which soon grew into several houses full of spaced-out musicians, artists, poets, beatniks and other creative weirdos. The Workshop became one of the first alternative institutions of the then new culture, paralleling similar efforts on the east and west coasts.

As part of its multi-media activities, the Artist's Workshop Press was born, consisting of a mimeo machine "borrowed" from Wayne State University and a bunch of hijacked paper, ink and stencils. With this setup a series of mimeographed editions of 500 copies were published of several publications; the jazz/poetry magazines, "Work" and "Change," poetry editions by emerging national poets like Allen Ginsberg and Gary Snyder, as well as editions by local poets such as Sin-

clair, Jim Semark, Allen VanNewkirk and others.

In 1966 Sinclair finished serving 6 months in jail for his second weed bust, entrapped into the situation by undercover Detroit Narcotics Bureau agents. Soon afterwards he and Allen VanNewkirk published several issues of the newspaper "Guerilla," a tabloid "of culture and revolution."

Although "Guerilla" didn't last long, it was soon replaced by the Warren-Forest SUN, named for the Wayne State campus area in Detroit where a new community was developing. It was now 1967, the summer of Love, when the mass cultural movement exploded into millions of fertile post-war minds.

A new kind of music was invading AM radio in the form of the Jefferson Airplane, the Doors and Bob Dylan. Timothy Leary and LSD were opening up new vistas of consciousness. People tried to get high on bananas. Nothing has been the same since.

The SUN reflected these scenes precisely. A 12-16 page tabloid, its pages were imaginatively laid out with cultural propaganda, local news items of interest, interviews with the likes of Leary, Sun Ra and Archie Shepp, the first Dope-O-Scope, reports on police activities and other fare similar to that erupting nationwide in scores of newly emergent "underground" newspapers. The SUN, as well as the "Fifth Estate" then operating in Detroit, provided another view of existence not found anywhere else in those early days.

At the same time that John and Leni Sinclair, Pun and Genie Plamondon, Gary Grimshaw and others were putting out the new SUN, the Artists Workshop was transforming itself into a new organization, Trans-Love Energies. Trans-Love was a non-profit collective designed to reach the expanding cultural movement with a variety of activities, including managing, designing posters for and doing lightshows at the Grande Ballroom. Soon the group took on the management of the MC5, developing it into the most successful and political Michigan rock and roll band.

But the naivete of that initially idealistic and beautiful surge of new energy was not going to get off that easily. Whereas to the freeks of America all that was needed was peace and love, the police and other guardians of the antiquated order were determined to stifle the movement of history and pull their children firmly back into the Eisenhower years of silence. In January, 1967, the police raided the entire Warren-Forest community, arresting 56 people, including Sinclair. While the summer was of Love, it was also of black rebellions throughout the country. The Detroit riots and the growing use of mind-expanding drugs fueled a growing police state. In April of 1968, Martin Luther King was assassinated and a terrified Detroit establishment clamped a curfew down on the city.

The curfew shut down the Grande Ballroom, while the growing repression made operating in Detroit next to impossible. So Trans-Love Energies moved to Ann Arbor, where survival seemed more of a possibility, and there was a large youth community to interact with.

Soon after moving to Ann Arbor, Trans-Love began publishing sporadic mimeographed versions of the SUN. The street sheet became involved immediately in the struggle to establish the free summer concerts. It helped organize community meetings during the summer that seven coeds were murdered on the streets and Sheriff Harvey's Hogs used the investigation as an excuse to harass longhairs. The SUN helped initiate a Recall Harvey Campaign, a Legal Self-Defense Fund (LSD) and otherwise reported on the dope of the day. That October of 1968, Trans-Love became the White Panther Party. Modelled after ideas coming from Huey Newton and Eldridge Cleaver, the WPP was a first attempt at synthesizing the new culture with an active political organization and rock and roll band.

While it may have immediately copied too much of the Black Panther's style and rhetoric, still the WPP was one of the most creative of the late sixties political groups directing their activities at young people.

But John Sinclair's case pending from the 1967 raid in Detroit was coming to a head. In July of 1969 Judge Robert Colombo sentenced him to 9½ to 10 years in the penitentiary for simple weed possession. Especially now that he was part of the WPP and manager of a popular band that spread the party's ideals, the state of Michigan wanted Sinclair behind bars.

After John went to prison the informational outlet for the WPP became Ken Kelley and the Ann Arbor "Argus" staff, who joined forces with the people on Hill Street. A month later Pun Plamondon, Skip Taube and Jack Forrest went to prison, and the WPP began re-evaluating its existence. It was decided that more emphasis needed to be placed on practical alternative programs in the community and less on spouting rhetoric about offing pigs which only brought down worse heat and did not organize anybody.

As a result of these discussions the Rainbow People's Party was formed on May 1, 1971, and along with it the first issue of the SUN appeared as a tabloid in Ann Arbor. (The cover is printed above.) The Argus, meanwhile, had become much less of a force, too tied to the rhetoric of 1969. Ken Kelley had left town after publishing 2 issues of the WPP national magazine, called "Sundance."

The new SUN began as a weekly, published from the basement of 1520 Hill St. by Gary Grimshaw, David Fenton, Ann Hoover and the entire RPP, which financially supported the paper. Soon the SUN moved back to a bi-weekly that featured articles on emerging local food co-ops, the parks program, demonstrations in Washington, local rock and continued on page 28

# SUN History

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roll bands and the general growth of an alternative, rainbow community. It's primary focus in those early days, however, was the effort to "Free John Now!" The paper was the major source of information on John's case in Michigan, helping to involve tens of thousands in the effort to gain his release. Culminating in the December 10 Freedom Rally, where a special SUN edition of 15,000 copies was handed out free, the Free John Now movement was a success, and Sinclair walked free on December 13.

From there the focus of the SUN, along with its general coverage of local events, turned to the Human Rights Party and the elections of April, 1972. The paper focused on HRP candidates issue after issue; interviewing them, reporting on their activities, printing the HRP platform and program, urging people to register to vote, etc. Some months before the election the SUN was being handed out free in a bi-weekly

edition of 15,000.

Nancy Wechsler and Jerry DeGriek of the HRP were elected to office that year, the \$5 marijuana law was passed, and spirits had never been higher. The paper turned to the state-wide initiative (MMI) to decriminalize marijuana and the effort to organize a local Tribal Council. The functioning of the People's Ballroom, the Blues and Jazz Festival, WNRZ and the Washington St. Community Center became major items of coverage, along with regular news and features in the political, musical and cultural realms.

But soon unforeseen changes set in. The Community Center and Ballroom burned down in December of '72. Also at that time the Human Rights Party began abandoning its original direction and became dominated by isolated ideologues who decided a major focus of the fall campaign should be opposing McGovern, who seriously proposed a platform plank that would demand that everyone use female pronouns all the time, who spread themselves too thin in too many races and lost every one. The SUN turned critical of the HRP which later went on to repeat their mistaken approach and

split the vote in April of '72 to elect a Republican Mayor and Majority.

While this was happening, financial woes began beating down the paper, which was supported by loans gathered by the RPP and not enough through advertising. Plus the RPP was undergoing tremendous financial problems and internal changes of membership. So the SUN was forced to stop publication altogether on January 23, 1973, until May of that year.

In addition the paper had other problems of a different nature. Without realizing it, the people working on the SUN were becoming far too isolated from the rest of what was happening in town. Too much of their world was filled only with the activities going on from Hill Street and not enough of the rest of Ann Arbor. The SUN over-emphasized the activities of the RPP, which published it with nothing but the best of intentions, and of the fledgling Tribal Council. The activities of those two groups were certainly worthy of printspace, but so was a great deal more. Eventually the staff that remained realized the SUN had to change drastically.

The first move was to get out from the basement of Hill Street in order to become more accessible and inter-related with the rest of town, to become more of a community newspaper. The paper was no longer published or edited by the RPP, nor was it financially supported by it any longer, although Linda Ross of the RPP took a leading role in reviving the SUN over the summer. Offices were secured downtown on First St, above the Blind Pig cafe.

Since that time the SUN has published bi-weekly, coming out consistently on time since October. It has grown from 16 pages to the present 32. Losing money until just 4 issues ago, the paper went thousands of dollars into debt in order to sustain itself and work to regain the community's confidence. The SUN is now run by an Editorial Collective with no RPP members on it, which decides the paper's direction along with the entire working staff. Most of the faces are new. There's still plenty of room for more helpers in the editorial, art and business areas.

This year the paper has also retained its goal of community activism. The SUN spearheaded the drive to stop McDonald's, exposed undercover narcotics agents, helped re-enact the \$5 weed law which took effect today, and uncovered the campaign by Citizens for Good Housing to defeat rent control. Our coverage includes local and national news (though we need more in-depth news articles), features on health, food, music, politics and culture, and regular columns for record, concert, movie and book reviews. We are continually seeking more input and suggestions for how we can continue to expand and better serve the SUN's readers, who are the only reason we exist in the first place.

--SUN Editorial Board  
May 1, 1974

## Lawsuit

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Following the ruling by the Supreme Court, the CIA Conspiracy Trial was dropped by the Justice Department as were many other political trials. Sinclair, Plamondon and Forrest countered by filing a half-million dollar lawsuit for illegal wiretapping against Nixon, John Mitchell, L. Patrick Gray, Richard Kleindienst and the estate of J. Edgar Hoover.

In April 1973 the judge hearing preliminary motions in the suit, summarily dismissed President Nixon as a defendant. This was done without notifying attorneys for the plaintiffs and without arguments or a public hearing.

The May 2nd hearing is seeking to have the judge reconsider his decision of April, '73. The lawyers will argue that the judge acted improperly in dismissing Nixon from the suit since the Chief Executive had personally ordered the illegal wiretapping and the Attorney General was acting as his "alter ego" in carrying out the wiretaps.

## City Budget

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investigations decreased for the second year in a row. She then asked how this reflected Krasny's expressed priority on stopping hard drug traffic. Krasny responded that hard drugs are the police's primary concern, and that marijuana arrests usually occur when someone is arrested for another offense.

Underlying Krasny's appearance was the understanding that his budget will probably remain unchanged. In order to alter the city administrator's proposed budget, seven votes are required, and no likely combination of parties on Council could come up with that number. The three parties on City Council will be presenting their own budget alternatives, but this will serve mainly to show the people where they stand, since none is likely to get the necessary seven votes.

Police Department priorities will not change until channels for community input are provided. This can best be done through some form of community control of the Police Department. Until that happens, the people of Ann Arbor can expect to see little substantive change in this most intransigent area of city government.

--David Goodman

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